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**Environment and Communities  
Committee**

**30 January 2025**

**Review of CCTV Service - Update**

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**Report of: Tom Shuttleworth, Interim Director of Planning and Environment**

**Report Reference No: EC/30/24-25**

**Ward(s) Affected: All Wards**

**For Decision or Scrutiny: Decision**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide the Committee with information on the established operating model and complexities of the CCTV service, and the current cost of delivery.
2. Outline options for changes to the delivery model supported by information around the potential and known impacts of each option and any supporting financial information.
3. To update the Committee on ongoing work around efficiency savings and income generation opportunities that are being identified and explored.
4. Seek approval from Members to undertake a public consultation exercise on the proposed options with a view to identifying a preferred option for subsequent implementation, which will be the subject of a future report.

**Executive Summary**

5. The CCTV Service contributes towards the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025. This contribution is wide ranging, including our aspirations for a thriving and sustainable place; a great place for people to live, work and visit and welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods.

6. This commitment does however need to be balanced against the resources available to the Council which continues to operate in a very challenging financial climate. Therefore, as part of the development of options for the Council's MTFS 2025-2029 it was agreed to undertake a review of the CCTV service to determine the approach to future provision.
7. The CCTV service does not operate in isolation and instead provides support to internal Council departments such as Housing, Highways, Customer Services etc as well as external stakeholders (including Cheshire Constabulary). There is also 'paid for' service provision notably to Town & Parish Councils and businesses.
8. Although the CCTV service is considered a discretionary function it supports the duty of section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the obligation on Local Authorities to work in partnership, to develop and implement a strategy for tackling crime and disorder.
9. The Cheshire East CCTV Service currently operates on a 24/7/365 basis. The service also holds third party accreditation to the Home Office Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and the British Standard BS7958 for control room management.
10. During the 17-month period between April 2023 and October 2024 the CCTV service dealt with over 20,000 incidents, 50% of which were as a result of direct observation by a CCTV operator.
11. CCTV has a gross budget of £684,185 which includes staffing costs of £519,730. Income generation is approximately £232k leaving a net cost of £452k per annum.
12. An initial review of the service has produced a total of 5 options for future delivery models for the CCTV Service, undertaken to provide sufficient information to inform the proposed consultation with stakeholders.
13. Further detail on these options is provided in paragraph 33 of this report.
14. Income generation also needs to be considered as part of any solution to reduce the gross budget for the service although this will need to be cognisant of the final agreed service delivery model and any limitations it creates.
15. There has already been significant work to reduce costs over previous years through infrastructure improvements, a focussed staffing restructure and regular reviews of fees and charges. Ongoing work in this area, linked to this service review is detailed in paragraphs 33-39.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment and Communities Committee is recommended to:

1. Delegate authority to the Interim Director of Planning and Environment to take all necessary steps to undertake a public consultation and associated engagement to establish stakeholder's views on the future operating model options and;
2. Note that a clear recommendation on implementation of a preferred option, informed by the outcome of the public consultation and engagement with communities, will be brought back to Committee at a future date.

## Background

16. 286 local authorities in England provide public space CCTV services a total of 90,597 public CCTV cameras controlled by UK local authorities. Almost two thirds (64%) of local authorities have increased their surveillance, with 50 councils more than doubling their CCTV presence (2024 report) in two years. Our neighbouring authorities all provide CCTV surveillance services using in-house teams.
17. The value of CCTV is well recognised. Studies indicate that CCTV cameras act as a deterrent as well as a means of detection, preventing crime from occurring in the first instance. Studies conclude that actively monitored cameras are more effective not just in detecting and catching criminals, but increasing the perception of the risk of getting caught.
18. The presence of cameras within a community help to encourage community pride and confidence in the use of public space. A Cheshire East CCTV Opinion Survey 2021/Safety of Women in Public Places Survey 2021 found that 94.9% of respondents were in favour of the use of CCTV and that CCTV makes both residents and visitors feel safer. 94.7% were happy with the current level of CCTV whilst a further 70% asked for increased coverage.
19. Cheshire East Council has 165 fixed cameras and 25 mobile/deployable cameras which are used in hot spot areas to target antisocial behaviour, fly tipping etc. The CCTV control room also monitors 138 additional cameras in car parks, retail parks and some Council facilities. Demand for new camera installation/use and surveillance activity has increased in the past 5 years due to demand.

20. The Cheshire East CCTV service holds third party accreditation to the Home Office Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and the British Standard BS7958 for control room management. The 2024 Audit identified high standards of staff training and development, established operating procedures and a camera infrastructure that was proportionate to the need to reduce crime.
21. The Cheshire East CCTV Service currently operates on a 24/7/365 basis with two daily shifts of 12 hours.
22. During the 17-month period between April 2023 and October 2024 the CCTV service dealt with over 20,000 incidents, 50% of which were as a result of direct observation by a CCTV operator. Other significant referral routes were the police airwave radio as well as direct police contact, direct telephone calls to the service and the pub and shop watch system – Radiolink.
23. The service provides and supports a wide range of functions and services on a 24/7/365 basis. Activities are not just crime prevention, camera observation and evidence provision but an extension of other Council services including Highways, Housing, Regulatory Services etc. In these circumstances the CCTV service acts as an out of hours contact point reducing the need for separately funded arrangements.
24. Outside the Customer Service Centre operating hours (08.30-17.00), Bank Holidays and the Christmas closedown the CCTV service becomes the first port of call for customer enquiries, working to established protocols agreed with internal services.
25. The availability of the CCTV service makes it the primary control/command centre for public events, major incidents, including the Beechmere fire, flooding, and reports of public unrest as were seen over the summer months. Similarly, this makes the service well placed to provide monitoring systems for fire alarms, door entry and barrier systems and lone worker alarms for staff.
26. Via the Radiolink and a police Airwave Radio installed within the CCTV control room, operators have live access to ongoing matters which they are able to follow on camera almost instantaneously.
27. Appendix A provides detail on incident type, peak times, prevalence and location. It also provides more detailed information on the wider services offered by the service.
28. In November 2024 the CCTV service completed the installation of a new wireless CCTV network system across the whole of Cheshire East to significantly improve data quality and to provide a fit for purpose infrastructure upon which to develop capability and the service 'offer'.

This project has also seen a reduction in base budget of £250k over a three year period supplemented by reduced staffing costs following procurement of a bespoke maintenance contract. Payback of the capital funding for the wireless project (£205k) is also ongoing.

29. CCTV has a gross budget of £684,185 with staffing costs making up the greatest proportion at £519,730 – 76%. As a core element of assessing how the service might best ultimately move towards a cost neutral position it has therefore been necessary to consider operational changes that would reduce these staffing costs.
30. The following four options have been considered through the initial stage of the review;

**Do Nothing: Retain the Service with no changes**

This option would maintain CCTV service delivery as it currently exists; Two twelve-hour shifts with two operators per shift on a 24/7/365 footprint.

**Do Something 1: Retain the Service with minor restructure**

Within this model it has been identified that there is scope to restructure the team releasing savings of circa £41,000.

**Summary** - no impact to current service delivery levels, retaining potential to grow income generating services going forward.

**Do Something 2: Full directed observation operations with reduced staff support**

The development of a 'linked shift' rota would seek to reduce the number of operators on shift during the 24-hour period on weekdays (36 paid hours per day reduced from 48 hours). Weekends, where demand and risks of harm are greater, would continue with 2 operators per shift.

Savings to gross budget £71,000.

**Summary** - small reduction to current service delivery levels, retaining current income with potential to grow further going forward.

**Do Something 3: A mix of direct observation and recorded surveillance with reduced staff support**

The peak demand shift would operate over a working week with two 11-hour shifts between 7am and 11pm creating a six-hour cross over period between 12pm and 6pm. There would be no operator cover between 11 pm and 7 am each day instead there would be camera recording only.

Savings to gross budget £200,000

**Summary** - significant impact to service delivery – knock on impacts to current income. Reduction in future income due to diminished ‘live’ service.

#### **Do Something 4: Cease all CCTV operations**

The option to cease all CCTV provision would create a potential permanent revenue saving of £450k per annum, as the net costs of the service after income that would no longer be generated has been deducted.

This value however be subject to the initial year 1 deductions of staff severance costs and in the longer-term the cost implications of decommissioning the CCTV network.

#### **Income Generation**

31. The CCTV service attracts income from Town and Parish Councils and other more ad-hoc sources including external CCTV monitoring, alarm and barrier monitoring, door entry services and lone worker alarm monitoring.
32. The majority of income (84%) is from Town and Parish Council contributions for directed CCTV surveillance on the 24/7/365 operational model.
33. The service also receives direct funding for ad hoc projects, for example the recent Safer Streets Crewe Project which was funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner in 2023-2025 (£111k) and £7k funding for ‘Radiolink’ by the Safer Cheshire East Partnership (SCEP).
34. Income has increased by 33% over the last five years with new external monitoring contracts, increased fees and charges and the introduction of new chargeable services.
35. As part of the service review there has also been consideration of greater income generation opportunity particularly given the recent completion of the Borough wide wireless network installation which provides an enhanced infrastructure to support wider system support. This work includes the following proposals;
  - Attract new contracts for monitoring other CCTV systems.
  - Council wide contract review to determine services that may be brought ‘in-house’ and reduce Council spend (ongoing with procurement and facilities).

- Scoping chargeable out of hours provision for neighbouring authorities.
  - A further maintenance contract review to reduce contract costs.
36. It must be noted that any new contractual arrangements and hence the level of income that will be generated will only exist within the scope of the agreed service delivery model for the service.
37. It has been identified through the review work that has been carried out, that the most significant demand for work through the CCTV service is Cheshire Police. This is through surveillance work and the demand for evidence packages to support formal action.
38. An approach has therefore been made to the Police and Crime Commissioner to discuss whether there is the opportunity for more sustainable ongoing funding to the Cheshire East CCTV service, considering the level of usage by the Police force in discharging its own duties.
39. This dialogue will continue however cost recovery for these services will be included in the consultation materials as a specific question to form the basis as to a future decision as to whether to impose a reasonable charge for data provision to all external agencies.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

40. An informal briefing was provided to the Environment and Communities Committee briefing on 27 August 2024 as regards the proposal to review the CCTV Service as part of the MTFS 2025-29.

### Proposal for Consultation

41. This paper seeks permission to consult publicly on the proposed options contained within this report.
42. It is envisaged that the consultation will run from early February 2025 over a period 6 weeks with final dates to be publicised in due course. The consultation will have its own communications plan attached to ensure residents are actively engaged. Part of the engagement specific to the consultation will be;
- All Member briefings
  - Engagement with all Town and Parish Councils and specifically those who currently pay for CCTV Services for their areas.
  - Engagement with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Constabulary.

43. Due to the reliance on the CCTV service to support out of hours provision outside of Customer Contact Centre hours there will be a need to undertake engagement with internal Council services to understand the impacts of any changes to delivery, including increased service costs.
44. Following consultation final proposals will be developed and brought back to committee for a decision to implement, which is targeted for March 2025, to allow any revised operating model to go live in financial year 2025/26.

### Staff Engagement

45. Due to the scale of the changes proposed in some of the Do Something options, formal consultation will need to be entered into with both staff and the Trade Unions if any of these are selected as the preferred way forward.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

46. The proposal supports Open and enabling objective of the Corporate Plan, delivering the priority set out to:
  - (a) Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development, improvement and transformation.

### **Other Options Considered**

47. This report introduces a series of options in relation to the future operating model of the CCTV Service.
48. Following consultation, a further report will be brought back to the Committee identifying a preferred option for service delivery having had regard to consultation feedback.

### **Implications and Comments**

*Monitoring Officer/Legal*

#### General

49. CCTV services are considered to be a discretionary function, however, there remains a duty within Section 17 Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and an obligation on Local Authorities to work in partnership to develop and implement a strategy for tackling crime and disorder. Section 163 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 creates the power for local



authorities to provide closed circuit television coverage of any land within their area for the purposes of crime prevention or victim welfare.

50. As part of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, there exists a requirement highlighted by the Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) to local authority Chief Executives, that they must ensure that all CCTV systems that are operated by, or on behalf of, the local authority are compliant with the requirements of DPA, GDPR and Codes of Practice for CCTV. This would include stand-alone systems such as those used in libraries, leisure centres, body worn cameras, vehicles and all Council buildings.

### Consultation

51. When undertaking a public consultation, the Council must follow the Gunning Principles and to ensure that the following are met;
  - (i) The proposals are still at a formative stage and no formal decision has been made or predetermined by the decision makers;
  - (ii) That sufficient information is provided to the consultees this needs to be available accessible and easily interpretable by the consultees to provide an informed response;
  - (iii) Sufficient opportunity should be given to consultees to participate in the consultation, the length of time given for the consultee to respond should depend upon the subject and the extent of the impact on the consultation and;
  - (iv) Conscientious consideration must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made.
52. If the Council fails to comply with the above, the consultation exercise may be deemed to be illegitimate and any subsequent decision ultra vires.
53. Ongoing regard must be had to the public sector equality duty and consideration given to the equality impact of the proposals, having due regard to the need to eliminate conduct prohibited by the act, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Consideration should also be given to ways of preventing or balancing the effects of the proposals on certain groups and any mitigations around perceived breaches. Evidence will be required to substantiate changes and the process in reaching any final decisions should be accurately recorded so the Council can defend its position in the event of a legal challenge.

## Employment Law

54. If the outcome of the public consultation supports a proposed decision to substantially reduce the level of staffed hours within the Service or other potential changes affecting the terms and conditions of staff employed in the Service, staff may be at risk of redundancy or be entitled to a buy-out of hours dependent on individual circumstances. A full and genuine consultation process will need to be carried out with trade unions and staff before final decisions are made to reduce the risk of legal claims such as unfair dismissal or breach of contract. If no suitable alternative roles are available in a redundancy situation, staff will be entitled to redundancy payments upon termination of their employment.

### *Section 151 Officer/Finance*

55. In 2024/25 the CCTV Service has a gross budget of £684k which includes staffing costs of £520k or circa 76% of the total.
56. Income generation is approximately £232k leaving a net cost of the service to be circa £452k per annum.
57. Within the draft MTFS 2025-29 there is a specific reference to the review of the CCTV Service which has a nominal £40,000 budget saving associated. All options presented for consultation other than the “Do Nothing” scenario will achieve this savings target.
58. Subject to the preferred option presented in a future report to the Committee this figure will then be updated.

### *Policy*

59. The CCTV Service supports the following priorities from the Corporate Plan 2021-2025 as detailed in the table below.

<b>An open and enabling organisation.</b>	<b>A council which empowers and cares about people</b>	<b>A thriving and sustainable place</b>
Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.	Work together with residents and partners to support people and communities to be strong and resilient.	A great place for people to live, work and visit.
Support a sustainable financial future for the council, through service development,	Protect and support our communities and safeguard children, adults at risk and families	Welcoming, safe and clean neighbourhoods.

<p>improvement and transformation.</p> <p>Look at opportunities to bring more income into the borough.</p>	<p>from abuse, neglect and exploitation.</p>	
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60. Changes to the current operating model for the CCTV will have an impact on the ability to meet these priorities either in part or in totality. This impact will be more fully defined and communicated following consultation and the development of the preferred delivery model.

### *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion*

61. A full equality impact assessment has been undertaken and is included at Appendix B.
62. This will be updated further with the results of the proposed consultation and engagement process and presented in support of any final recommendations on operating model for the service.

### *Human Resources*

63. The option proposed will require a reduction in staffing levels and the costs associated with this i.e. redundancy pay, statutory notice and pension strain will have a negative impact on savings.
64. Options have identified risks to staff as increased shifts and increased lone working could have a detrimental impact on the health and safety and wellbeing of staff.
65. During the period of change and subsequent adjustment to the new ways of working, there is a risk the service could suffer from the loss of morale, goodwill, and elevated levels of sickness absence.

### *Risk Management*

66. The table below sets out the key risks to the ongoing implementation of the service review and ongoing mitigating actions.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating Actions</b>
Budget savings attached to review proposal do not include redundancy costs.	Paused recruitment and vacancy management within service to minimise potential for redundancies.
Additional costs to remove CCTV infrastructure (if necessary) are not included in budget savings.	Work to understand extent of infrastructure removal (if necessary) and associated costs.
Impact on staff, increased sickness levels, health and wellbeing implications, objections from Trade Unions to proposals.	Commenced service re-design work and seeking of approvals at earliest opportunity. Develop a clear communications and engagement strategy with staff and Trade Unions. Scoping of specific training opportunities for increased lone working by staff, decision making and priority setting.
Proposals result in the loss of current accreditation standards.	Engagement undertaken with the Surveillance Camera Commissioner and the British Standards on proposals. Input provided in further report post consultation close.
Proposals impact on contractual terms due to reduced service levels. Negative impact on current income levels.	Early engagement with contractual partners and contributors with respect to ongoing review. More detailed engagement at point of preferred option approval.
Reputational damage of reductions to CCTV service provision. Increased levels of crime and fear of crime.	Relevant communication work at appropriate time.
Additional costs to internal services due to reduced operational capacity/availability.	Planned engagement with internal services to understand direct impacts. Detailed in future report to committee.

### *Rural Communities*

67. There are no specific impacts for rural communities.

*Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)*

68. There are no direct impacts on this stakeholder group as a result of the proposals.

### *Public Health*

69. Crime is a public health issue. It shares common causes with ill health, particularly poverty, and fear of crime is itself a major cause emotional and psychological well-being. Research shows that fear of crime results in people exercising less, as well as reducing how often people socialise, resulting in poorer mental and physical health.

70. Crime directly impacts individual members of society through physical injury, any physical damage including death, injury, or violence.

71. There are health service costs from dealing with the physical and emotional harms of crime. These include ambulance costs, medical procedure costs associated with physical harm, and counselling costs associated with the emotional harms. For example, the emotional and physical cost for a single violent crime resulting in injury costs health services £8,240\*.

### *Climate Change*

72. This proposal will not have a material impact on the council's carbon agenda.

<b>Access to Information</b>	
Contact Officer:	Tracey Bettaney, Head of Regulatory Services <a href="mailto:Tracey.bettaney@cheshireeast.gov.uk">Tracey.bettaney@cheshireeast.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix A – CCTV Service data Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment (pre consultation)
Background Papers and Links:	Cheshire East CCTV - <a href="#">Closed Circuit Television - CCTV</a> Cheshire East CCTV Code of Practice - <a href="#">code-of-practice-for-2024.pdf</a> Office for National Statistics – Impact of crime on victims and society 2022 - <a href="#">The impact of crime on victims and society - Office for National Statistics</a>

	<p>Cheshire Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2029 - <a href="#">Cheshire Serious Violence Strategy</a></p> <p>Safe Cheshire East Partnership - <a href="#">Safer Cheshire East Partnership</a></p>
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